

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Town Hall Conference Room B**

Tuesday, July 16, 2013

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Laurie Best, Karla Fox, Jon Hand, Peter Millman, Betsy Paterson, Karin Randolph

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

Guests: Matt Hart, Mansfield Town Manager; Linda Painter, Mansfield Director of Planning and Development; Brian Kent, Kent + Frost

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from June 4, 2013

Karin Randolph asked for clarification if Lon Hultgren was at the last meeting. Cynthia van Zelm will check (*Minutes corrected to indicate that he was not at the meeting*). Peter Millman made a motion to approve the June 4, 2013 minutes. Betsy Paterson seconded the motion. Jon Hand abstained. The motion was approved.

4. Review of Conceptual Plan for Town Square

Steve Bacon said an ad hoc advisory committee of the Partnership had reviewed consultant responses to a Request for Qualifications for design of the town square. The advisory committee chose Kent + Frost to design the town square.

An initial meeting with Town, University and non-profit organization stakeholders was held to provide input to the design. Kent + Frost developed three alternatives which they brought to the advisory committee for review. The committee endorsed a preferred alternative. A second meeting was held in June with stakeholders to review the preferred alternative.

Mr. Bacon said the more formal review starts now. He introduced Brian Kent from Kent + Frost.

Mr. Kent said his team developed some guiding principles for the design based on input from the stakeholders, the Storrs Center Design Guidelines, and previous discussion on the town square.

A general consensus was formed for function and design. The square should be visually open so you can see through it, while being defined at the same time. It needs to be able to accommodate larger

events such as the Festival on the Green and smaller performances or a film night. On a day to day basis it needs to be appealing to a wide audience. Mr. Kent said the team also wanted the square to reflect the personality of Mansfield.

Mr. Kent reviewed the plans with the Committee. He said the north side of the square is envisioned to be paved and a flexible space so that activity from Dog Lane and its businesses can overflow to this area. One idea is it include moveable tables and chairs. Mr. Kent said a shade structure is being proposed for this area.

Public art could also be part of the square and he has identified three possible locations. Some ideas are a silkworm and a gourd to reflect Mansfield's history. A musical instrument could reflect the importance of the performing arts to the area and the location of the square across from the UConn School of Fine Arts.

In order to provide a great venue for performances, the goal is to provide a stage in the southeast corner of the square so it is oriented toward Storrs Road. The stage is planned to be 26 feet wide by 20 feet deep.

There would also be a stone wall that people can sit on. At its highest point it would be 2 feet.

Mr. Kent said initially there was support for a lot of green space. But, the maintenance of a green space is more expensive and involved so a 50 foot diameter of green is proposed.

The team wanted to allow handicapped access to the green so it is flush at one entry.

The rest of the surface is permeable pavers and compacted stone dust.

Ms. Paterson asked if it is difficult to keep stone dust intact. Mr. Kent said there is not a large slope so the stone dust will not wash down with the rain.

Mr. Kent said there will be trees in the town square. There would be two fairly large planting strips behind the stone wall with some perennials. Mr. Kent said the Garden Club had expressed interest in landscaping beyond just shrubs.

Mr. Kent said the team is proposing internal lighting that would be embedded in the stone wall. Vertical lights are proposed in the green itself.

Mr. Hand asked if there are adequate site lines on Bolton Road Ext. Mr. Kent replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Hand expressed interest in a compass effect where lights would be pointed directionally.

Ms. Paterson asked about the height of the trees. Mr. Kent said there will be a clear zone so that you can see through them.

Mr. Kent said he is proposing a long bike rack against a fence along Bolton Road Ext. Mr. Millman said he visited Hygienic Park in New London and noted that storage was an important issue. Mr. Kent said this was discussed with the advisory committee. The concern was the amount of

space it would take up in the town square with a building. Public Works Director Lon Hultgren has indicated that there is room in the parking garage for some storage.

Mr. Kent said water and electricity is necessary for the square. The solution is to tap into electricity from the TS-3 building. There will be an above grade switch box. Water is available below grade.

Laurie Best asked about solar panels on the stage or shade structure. Mr. Kent said the angle and trees do not work well for solar.

Matt Hart said the plan is to construct the basics of the square with grant funds and seek additional funding for the rest of the elements. Mr. Kent said most of the work would be done in 2014. Mr. Kent said the initial work would include grading, stone walls, concrete for stage, lawn element. Mr. Bacon expressed interest in the square being ready when the TS-3 building opens next fall.

Mr. Millman said he likes the connections to Dog Lane and Royce Circle and emphasized thinking of the square in the larger context of the roads and sidewalks. Linda Painter said that UConn is looking at the Storrs Road/Bolton Road intersection as the southern gateway to UConn and ways to enhance that area.

Mr. Millman asked what material is planned for the shade structure. Mr. Kent said it would likely be metal or a synthetic material.

On a separate note, Cynthia van Zelm said the State had approved the location of the crosswalk across from Town Hall.

Ms. Fox asked for an overall review of Storrs Center at one of the next meetings in the fall.

5. Adjourn

Ms. Paterson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hand seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm